

Section VIII

(h) COMMUNITY SERVICE PLAN

The Employment and Human Services Department worked for several months with Community Based Organizations, Unions, Employers, and Employee groups to plan the Community Service portion of the CalWORKs Plan. Those involved established a process that is fair to CalWORKs participants, other employees, and employers. This process involves work experience in the public sector or with private, non-profit organizations. The Community Service Planning Task Force¹ completed research and needs assessments in developing a plan for addressing Community Service in Contra Costa County.

The Community Service Plan is a comprehensive process that meets CalWORKs legislative requirements while enabling CalWORKs participants to learn basic job skills as they provide needed service to the communities in which they live. It will give CalWORKs participants an opportunity to make a real investment in their communities.

A wide variety of placements will be offered, breaking from the traditional clerical-type of position, offering hard skills training in addition to basic job skills. Particular attention was paid to the needs of existing employees at a job site to ensure that no displacement or other unfair labor tactics result from placement of a CalWORKs participant.

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

It is anticipated that community service participants will perform a myriad of duties for agencies that typically have a shortage of support staff. Community Service placements in Contra Costa will be in recycling programs, Head Start, public libraries, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Battered Women's Alternatives, and county hospitals and clinics. Participants will function as clerical assistants, recycling personnel, teacher's aides, childcare providers, shuttle drivers, and in any other appropriate training position.

Ideally, Community Service Program administrators will develop more than just clerical positions for participants. Collaboration with business leaders will be important to develop training slots in non-profit organizations with opportunities for variety in selection, upward mobility and self-sufficiency for participants.

ASSIGNMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Community Service Activities can be assigned at various times in the Welfare-to-Work continuum of services. Assignments are made primarily for training purposes, allowing participants an opportunity to gain real-world work experience. Additionally, assignments can be made to satisfy programmatic requirements, such as those imposed by time limits. At all times, efforts will be made to match program participant's skills and abilities with

¹ See Attachment #1, Community Service Planning Task Force roster

appropriate community service providers, affording the greatest learning/skill building experience possible.

PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM

Those individuals within the CalWORKs population who may need to participate in community service activities include:

- Welfare to Work participants (including those in Self-Initiated Programs) who have not reached their 18- or 24- month time limit may be assigned to the community service program, if appropriate, and may concurrently participate in community service and other welfare to work activities, including training and educational activities, to fulfill the required number of work participation hours.
- CalWORKs participants whose remote location prevents them from participating in other welfare-to-work activities will perform Community Service in their local community.
- Welfare-to-Work participants who have reached their 18- or 24-months time limit and are unable to find unsubsidized work for sufficient hours to meet their work requirement and the County certifies jobs are unavailable.

Welfare-to-Work participants who have reached their 18- or 24-month time limit may participate, on an individualized basis, in other instruction or training activities that are required for, or relevant to, their specific community service activity, i.e. computer training classes needed to perform in his/her community service as clerical support staff. These individualized instruction or training activities also are countable towards meeting the community service participation requirement.

An individual's hours of participation in substance abuse treatment and/or mental health counseling and/or domestic abuse services may also be counted toward meeting the individual's work requirement, if the treatment/counseling services enables or supports the individual's participation in community service and is included in the individual's welfare-to-work plan.

Employment and Human Services staff will determine which Community Service slot would be most beneficial for each participant, and assign the client to it. Worksite agency staff will monitor the participation of each trainee, and provide a written evaluation of their progress on a monthly basis. In addition, worksite staff will provide the participant and the Employment and Human Services Department with a final evaluation of the trainee at the conclusion of the placement. Based in part on the evaluation, Employment and Human Services staff will then reassign the participant to a different placement, if unsubsidized employment has not been obtained.

AGENCIES INVOLVED IN ADMINISTERING AND MANAGING THE PROGRAM

Making Community Service activities available to CalWORKs welfare-to-work participants is a multi-faceted process requiring the collaboration of program administrators, community service site providers and community service participants. The program focus is to help participants develop the skills, habits and work experience they will need to secure unsubsidized employment, while promoting personal responsibility, independence and self-sufficiency. In order to meet these goals, each group involved in the process must assume certain roles and meet specific responsibilities. An outline of these roles and responsibilities follows:

- A. **Administrating Agency-** Employment and Human Services Department
 1. Overall administrative responsibility for the Community Service Program.
 2. Selection and referral of community service participants
 3. Establish performance standards for work sites.
 4. Establish minimum program performance standards for participants.
 5. Create appropriate forms, reports, and training material to be used by work sites (e.g. time sheets; progress reports; exit evaluations, etc.)
 6. Develop a work-site handbook and other appropriate material, which will provide written guidelines and procedures for new work sites and participants.
 7. Conduct group or individual training for new work sites.
 8. Provide centralized support services.
 9. Case management support.
 10. Monitoring of progress toward established employment goals.
 11. On-the-job coaching or corrective counseling as needed.
 12. Job-placement services, including job club/search activities.
 13. Referral of participants to appropriate support services, as in the case of serious mental illness. When appropriate, the Employment and Human Services Department will provide an on-site (co-located) staff person to assist the worksite with serious case management issues, such as drug or mental health problems.
- B. **Community Service Worksite Agencies:**
 1. Must qualify under IRS 501C3 rules for non-profits or be public agencies. Worksites will be conveniently located and accessible for participants.
 2. Assume full responsibility for community service training at individual worksites.
 3. Assume full responsibility for job supervision.
 4. Provide on-site support to Community Service participants.

DURATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All community service assignments will be performed in accordance with ACL 99-111 and will not be permanent. Community service activities will be temporary and transitional in nature; that is, they will be short-term, with specified ending dates. For community service participants who have not reached their 18/24-month time limit community service will be interspersed with other activities, such as job search. For participants who have exceeded the

18/24-month time limit, a six-month term may be necessary because participants may have multiple barriers to employment, and they may need additional time to learn skills that will lead to self-sufficiency. The length of the assignment will depend upon the complexity of the job being learned. The approximate duration of jobs involving simple tasks will be three months.

The community service participant's attendance and progress in learning work skills will be monitored monthly. After three or six months, the participant's readiness for a more challenging assignment or unsubsidized employment will be assessed, and reassignment or job placement made.

The intention of Community Service activities is that it will lead to unsubsidized employment.

SUPPORTIVE EFFORTS

The following table outlines the range of services, a brief description of the service, and the partners available to provide the service:

KEY SUPPORT AREAS (and comments)	DESCRIPTION	SERVICE PARTNERS
<u>Education and Job Training</u>	To include short-term skills development, basic education and job training. Minimum proficiency up to the 8 th grade level to the extent feasible; literacy skills	Colleges, co-op education programs; CBOs; One-Stops; America Reads; Project Second Chance
<u>Job Search</u>	Provide reinforcement and support for individuals as they search for unsubsidized employment. Provide access to placement services.	One-Stops; CBOs; Internet connections
<u>Chemical Dependency</u>	Detox; Residential Out-Patient; Recovery Support	Health Services Department and its multiple contractors; New Connections
<u>Mental Health</u>	Assess the need for long-term treatment, support and group therapy	Health Services Department (CMHS)/ Support Groups
<u>Domestic Violence</u>	Victimization is an issue that must be addressed in a comprehensive way. Support services should provide more than a safety net for those abused and their children; they should also educate all about self-empowering conditions.	Women Services Unit/Health Services; Battered Women's Alternative (with support for housing)

A full range of supportive efforts/services, based upon the individual's Welfare-to-Work plan, will be available to participants who have not met their 18- or 24-month time limit.

Hours spent in training or education post time-limits will only count toward the community service hours if the training or education is required for, or directly related to, the community service assignment.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

In an effort to assist the participant in removing all barriers to self-sufficiency, Contra Costa will provide assistance with childcare, transportation, and ancillary expenses to those performing community service hours and meeting work participation requirements. The County will also provide personal counseling, if needed to eliminate employment barriers. These activities will only count toward the community service requirement post time limits when the service enables the individual to participate in community service, and it is included in the individual's Welfare-to-Work plan.

Key Support Areas	Description	Service Partners
<u>Child Care-</u> <i>It is important to note that a dearth of resources exist. This is especially true for particular areas of the county such as North Richmond, which has no child care facilities.</i>	Day care slots; help with transportation; more after school programs; encourage entrepreneurship; train more providers to offer care in their homes; train mothers on what to look for in a provider; continue and enlarge programs that train people to work in day care centers	K-12 in school/after school programs; So. Harbor MLK after school program; CBO (i.e. YMCA, Girls and Boys Clubs); child care council; health community; faith community; colleges; in-house care; family cooperatives managed by parents w/ educational links; employer arranged in-house child care; Village Resource Center, Brentwood
<u>Transportation-</u> <i>This is one of our largest obstacles in the county. Yet, most of our recipients must somehow get to community service or work sites and childcare locales via some type of public transportation. In some areas there is one bus line running once per hour daily, which does not allow one to work non-traditional hours.</i>	Assistance is needed in putting together sound travel programs to ensure participant's ability to get to strategic locales/routes. Under further development in Contra Costa County are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Transportation Voucher System • Geographic Information System Mapping • Transportation kiosks 	Members of the Transportation Alliance, including transit providers, TDM managers, kiosks, Health Services, Internet-based services, and other providers as needed.
<u>Ancillary Services and Personal Counseling</u>	To support Community Service activities and remove barriers to employment	Health Services Department and other appropriate providers, based on need